

# Building vs. Buying an API Hub

Making The Right Choice For Your Organization

Regardless of their size or industry, virtually every organization wants to become a powerful digital business. Reaching this lofty goal requires a well executed API strategy with an API hub at its core. Organizations looking to accelerate innovation can do so through an internal API hub that provides API builders and API consumers with a centralized place to discover, collaborate, and consume APIs. Likewise, for those organizations focused on creating new revenue streams or extending their products and services, a partner facing API hub provides that essential connection point between its API builders and partner consumers. The debate emerges between buying an API hub or attempting to build one in house.

This guide will walk you through the key decision criteria of building vs. buying an API hub and will demonstrate how buying is the right choice for most organizations.

## Evaluation Criteria:



Solution  
Requirements



Resource  
Impact



Cost and  
ROI



Time to  
Value

## Instructions

To assist in the decision-making process each criterion section comes with its own self-assessment scorecard. Select the benefits which are important to your organization. The totals in each section will be tallied in a consolidated scorecard at the end to provide a recommendation on whether to build or buy.

## Solution Requirements

For most organizations the starting point in any build vs. buy evaluation is assessing the solution requirements. This is of particular importance when looking at an API hub. The solution requirements will clearly define the scope of what will need to be included in a purchased solution or developed using the organization's own in-house resources. The range of capabilities required to make an API hub useful to all of its users is extensive. It needs to be able to support and enable a myriad of user types: API Builders, API Consumers, and API Administrators - developers and business users alike.

### Minimum Features and Capabilities Include:

- API Categorization
- API Discovery
- API Analytics
- GraphQL and Kafka Support
- Role-Based Access Controls
- Teams & Organization Management
- API Key Management & Rotation
- Billing and Monetization
- Multi-Gateway support and more

The breadth and depth of these requirements causes many organizations to underestimate the challenge and risks associated with taking a DIY approach. They often believe that they can get by with simply building a brand-compliant UI that lists their APIs. Almost invariably though, this approach will prove insufficient in driving adoption of the API hub as it lacks the tools and capabilities to fully empower its users with everything they need to find, govern, and collaborate on APIs. Even those that do take these considerations into their initial scoping commonly underestimate the complexity involved in deploying these capabilities at scale to support hundreds of APIs. Some organizations that initially attempted to build have been forced to abandon their DIY approach due to the complexity of building out table stakes features such as categorization alone.

By contrast, choosing RapidAPI delivers all the tools developers need through a best in class API hub experience and does so in a fraction of the time it would take to try and build them independently. RapidAPI Enterprise Hub integrates seamlessly with existing API systems to deliver a superior developer experience and more effective governance with clear insights into the entire API ecosystem.



## Solution Requirements Scorecard

Benefits of Buying RapidAPI	vs.	Risks of Building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Centralize APIs at scale across all departments and gateways</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support emerging API protocols like GraphQL and Kafka</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Build a best-in-class developer experience for API discovery, collaboration, consumption, and analytics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide API governance across every API gateway</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only supports limited API sets for limited sets of users</li> <li>• Only supports REST and SOAP API protocols</li> <li>• Extensive development effort required to meet expectations for developer experience</li> <li>• Difficult to build and manage required governance capabilities such as key management, Role-Based Access Controls, and more</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b> <input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		

## Resource Impact

With an extensive list of solution requirements, it should come as no surprise that building an API hub requires a large staff and considerable resources. Despite the prospect of this significant undertaking, organizations often feel that they have capable development teams that can handle the build and maintenance of an API hub. While those teams are often technically capable of building and maintaining an API hub, it requires a disproportionate amount of their time and focus, taking them off projects that drive value, differentiation, and even revenue.

This DIY approach with its disproportionate resource requirements frequently stalls innovation, slows delivery, and ultimately puts not just the API hub, but the organization’s competitive advantage at significant risk. This forces organizations into a no win scenario. They can choose to either allocate a large dedicated team to the build and maintenance of its API hub, taking these people off more strategic initiatives. Or, devote only a limited amount of resources to the API hub’s build and maintenance, putting it at significant risk of falling out of date. This lessens its utility, blocks continued adoption, and diminishes its sustained use.

RapidAPI, on the other hand, allows development teams to focus on building applications and services that deliver revenue, differentiation, and strategic value. Deploying RapidAPI Enterprise Hub, requires only a moderate resource investment during implementation and comes with the benefit of enterprise support. This drastically reduces the amount of resources required to not just launch but also support the API hub experience on an ongoing basis. With RapidAPI Enterprise Hub in place development teams can focus on building with your APIs not building the infrastructure that delivers them.



### Resource Impact Scorecard

Benefits of Buying RapidAPI	vs.	Risks of Building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Requires only a lean internal implementation team</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lowers project risk with proven solution and enterprise support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focuses development efforts on core business value</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires a large, dedicated team for API hub development and maintenance</li> <li>• Lack of external vendor support for the project</li> <li>• Limited developer bandwidth devoted to API infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b> <input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		

## Cost and ROI

The amount of resources an organization chooses to allocate to building and maintaining its API hub has a direct impact on its cost and subsequent ROI. Organizations that choose to build an API hub on their own can spread their investment out over time but this more often than not incurs costs that exceed a purchased investment. This delta is attributable to perpetual reinvestment costs needed to reconcile initial scoping gaps and new requirements to address a changing API landscape. Organizations that choose to build on their own often face the following challenges:

- Continuous maintenance costs
- New features and capabilities requirements
- A need to catch up with an evolving API environment

These challenges become particularly burdensome and costly as the volume of APIs continues to scale. Constrained by costs and resources, features needed to keep the API hub up to date with expanding next-generation API demands are frequently passed over, diminishing its effectiveness. This combination of inflated costs and diminishing effectiveness compounds a negative impact on the ROI.

With RapidAPI Enterprise Hub, developers have all the tools they need to discover, collaborate, and consume APIs from across the entirety of your API ecosystem out of the box. This complement of capabilities delivers immediate ROI and comes with the benefits of continuous innovation. Solely focused on delivering a world class next-generation API hub, RapidAPI continues to add new features and capabilities to address the demands of and complexity of an evolving API ecosystem.



### Cost and ROI Scorecard

Benefits of Buying RapidAPI	vs.	Risks of Building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maximized ROI on the project</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduced development and maintenance costs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continuous innovation and feature delivery included with subscription</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced or negative ROI on the project</li> <li>• Significant costs to develop and maintain the API hub</li> <li>• Requires continuous investment to keep up with expanding next-generation API demands</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b> <input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		

## Time to Value

Building an effective API hub requires not just substantial resource and financial investments, but a tremendous amount of time as well. Even for large scale organizations that can allocate a large dedicated development team, building an API hub often takes years just to get an initial solution deployed. This elongated timeline often puts not just primary project requirements at risk but creates a backlog of new requirements incurred between the time of scoping and MVP delivery. This scenario is one that has been experienced by even the largest of enterprises with one global financial institution experiencing an initial build cycle that took years and was never fully delivered. In this instance, the time to value was not only delayed, but fully blocked by an inability to deliver an up to date API hub experience that internal developers would adopt and utilize.

RapidAPI however accelerates your organization’s time to value with a next-generation API hub that is deployed in weeks rather than the years required to try and build from scratch. Trusted by leading enterprises, RapidAPI Enterprise Hub comes with years of development effort available out of the box and a proven implementation plan that accelerates time to value. The benefits of these years of development are delivered through a tried and tested phased approach to implementation which is built on the principles that ensure developer adoption and continued utilization of the API hub.



### Time to Value Scorecard

Benefits of Buying RapidAPI	vs.	Risks of Building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deploy in weeks and see immediate value</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Proven solution trusted by leading enterprises</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Years of development effort available out-of-box</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years of development required to meet all project requirements</li> <li>• Getting to production with a homegrown solution can take years</li> <li>• Risk that homegrown solution does not meet project requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b> <input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		

## Instructions

Take your totals from each of the above criterion sections and tally them on this consolidated scorecard. Organizations that score 7 or above are generally better served by buying rather than attempting to build on their own.

## Decision Criteria

	Reasons to Buy				
	Add up boxes checked above				
Solution Requirements	0	1	2	3	4
Resource Impact	0	1	2	3	
Cost and ROI	0	1	2	3	
Time to Value	0	1	2	3	
<b>Total (7 and above = Buy)</b> <input type="text"/>					

Using the above scorecard in coordination with careful self-assessment gives an organization the tools it needs to make an informed decision between building or buying an API hub. When looking at its benefits, particularly when weighed against the inherent risks of building, choosing to buy proves to be the right choice for most organizations. For these leading organizations looking to become powerful digital businesses the API hub choice is clear. RapidAPI Enterprise Hub, the next-generation

API hub enables them to accelerate innovation and bring software to market faster with one place to find, govern, and collaborate on all APIs. RapidAPI offers a single platform for all APIs – every API protocol, every API type, and across every API gateway. RapidAPI delivers these capabilities in a fraction of the time, minimizes resource investment, enables organizations to innovate faster, build new revenue streams, extend product life cycles to maximize ROI and become powerful digital businesses.